

A BOTTLE OF TEARS.

DR. TALMAGE CHOOSES A UNIQUE THEME FOR HIS DISCOURSE.

A Text That Carries Consolation to the Weary and Heavy Laden—The Griefs and Trials of This World Accrue to Our Glory Hereafter.

BROOKLYN, Aug. 27.—Rev. T. De Witt Talmage chose a unique theme as his subject for today—viz., "A Bottle of Tears," the text selected being Psalm 126, "Put thou my tears into thy bottle."

Hardly a mail has come to me for 30 years that has not contained letters saying that my sermons have comforted the writers of those letters. I have not this summer nor for 20 years spoken on the platform nor for 20 years spoken on the platform nor for 20 years spoken on the platform.

The prayer of my text was pressed out of David's soul by innumerable calamities, but it is just as appropriate for the distressed of all ages. Within the past century travelers and antiquarians have explored the ruins of many of the ancient cities, and from the very heart of those buried splendors of other days have been brought up evidences of emotions that long ago vanished from the world. From among tombs of those ages have been brought up lachrymatories, or lachrymatories, which are vials made of earthenware. It was the custom for the ancients to catch the tears that they wept over their dead in a bottle, and to place that bottle in the graves of the departed, and we have many specimens of the ancient lachrymatories, or tear bottles, in our museums.

TEAR BOTTLES FROM CYPRUS.

When on the way from the Holy Land our ship touched at Cyprus, we went back into the hills of that island and bought tear bottles which the natives had dug out of the ruins of the old city. There is nothing more suggestive to me than the tear bottles which I brought home and put among my curiosities. That was the kind of bottle that my text alludes to when David cries, "Put thou my tears into thy bottle."

The text intimates that God has an intimate acquaintance and perpetual remembrance of all our griefs, and a vial, or lachrymatory, or bottle, in which he catches and saves our tears, and I bring to you the condolence of this Christian sentiment. Why talk about grief? Alas, the world has its pangs, and now, while I speak, there are thick darknesses of soul that need to be lifted. There are many who are about to break under the assault of temptation, and perchance, if no words appropriate to their case be uttered, they perish. I come on no fool's errand. Put upon your wounds no salve compounded by human quackery; but, pressing straight to the mark, I hail you as a vessel misdeed cries to a passing craft, "Ship ahoy!" and invite you on board a vessel which has faith for a ruler, and prayer for sails, and Christ for captain, and heaven for an eternal harbor.

Catherine Rheinfeldt, a Prussian, keeps a boat with which she rescues the drowning. When a storm comes on the coast, and other people go to their beds to rest, she puts out in her boat for the relief of the distressed, and hundreds of the drowning have been brought safely to the beach. In his lifeboat of the gospel I put out today, hoping, by the help of God, to bring ashore at least one soul that may now be sinking in the billows of temptation and trouble. The tears that were once caught in the lachrymatories brought up from Herculaneum and Pompeii are all gone, and the bottle is as dry as the scorched of the volcano that submerged them, but not so with the bottle in which God gathers all our tears.

First, I remark that God keeps perpetually the record of repentance. Many a man has awakened in the morning so wretched from a night's debauch that he has sobbed and wept. Pains in the head, aching in the eyes, sick at heart and unfit to step into the light. He grieves, not about his misdoing, but only about its consequences. God makes no record of such weeping. Of all the million tears that have gushed as the result of such misdeeds, not one ever got into God's bottle. They dried on the fevered cheek or were dashed down by the bloated hand or fell into the red wine cup as it came again to the lips, foaming with still worse intoxication.

But when a man is sorry for his past and tries to do better—when he mourns his wasted advantages and bemoans his rejection of God's mercy and cries amid the lacerations of an aroused conscience for help out of his terrible predicament, then God listens; then heaven bows down; then scepters of pardon are extended from the throne; then his crying rends the heart of heavenly compassion; then his tears are caught in God's bottle.

PARADISE AND THE PERIL.

You know the story of paradise and the peril. I think it might be put to higher adaptation. An angel, starting from the throne of God to find what thing it can on earth worthy of being carried back to heaven. It goes down through the gold and silver mines of earth, but finds nothing worthy of transportation to the celestial city. It goes down through the depths of the sea, where the pearls lie, and finds nothing worthy of taking back to heaven. But coming to the foot of a mountain it sees a wanderer weeping over his evil ways. The tears of the prodigal start, but do not fall to the ground, for the angel's wing catches them, and with that treasure speeds back to heaven. God sees the angel coming and says, "Behold the brightest gem of earth and the brightest jewel of heaven—the tear of a sinner's repentance."

Oh, when I see the heavenly Shepherd bringing a lamb from the wilderness; when I hear the quick tread of the prodigal hastening home to find his father; when I see a sailor boy coming on the wharf and hurrying away to beg his mother's pardon for long neglect and unkindness; when I see the houseless coming to God for shelter, and the wretched,

and the vile, and the sin-burned, and the passion-blasted, appealing for mercy to a compassionate God, I exclaim in ecstasy and triumph, "More tears for God's bottle!"

Again, God keeps a tender remembrance of all your sicknesses. How many of you are thoroughly sound in body? Not one out of ten! I do not exaggerate. The vast majority of the race are constant subjects of ailments. There is some form of disease that you are particularly subject to. You have a weak side or back or are subject to headaches or faintnesses or lungs easily distressed. It would not take a very strong blow to shiver the golden bowl of life or break the pitcher at the fountain. Many of you have kept on in life through sheer force of will. You think no one can understand your distresses. Perhaps you look strong, and it is supposed that you are a hypocondriac. They say you are nervous—as if that were nothing! God have mercy upon any man or woman that is nervous!

At times you sit alone in your room. Friends do not come. You feel an insupportable loneliness in your sufferings, but God knows; God feels; God sympathizes. He counts the sleepless nights. He estimates the acuteness of the pain. He estimates the hardness of the breathing. While you pour out the medicine from the bottle and count the drops, God counts all your falling tears. As you look at the vials filled with nauseous drafts and at the bottles of distasteful tonic that stand on the shelf, remember that there is a larger bottle than these, which is filled with no mixture of earthly apothecaries, but it is God's bottle, in which he hath gathered all our tears.

THE SORROWS OF POVERTY.

Again, God remembers all the sorrows of poverty. There is much want that never comes to inspection. The deacons of the church never see it. The controllers of almshouses never report it. It comes not to church, for it has no appropriate apparel. It makes no appeal for help, but chooses rather to suffer than expose its bitterness. Fathers who fail to gain a livelihood, so that they and their children submit to constant privation; sewing women, who cannot pay the needful enough to earn them shelter and bread.

But whether reported or uncomplained, whether in seemingly comfortable parlors, or in damp cellars, or in hot garrets, God's angels of mercy are on the watch. This moment those griefs are being collected. Down on the back streets, in all the alleys, amid shanties and log cabins, the work goes on. Tears of want—seething in summer's heat or freezing in winter's cold—they fall not unheeded. They are jewels for heaven's casket. They are pledges of divine sympathy. They are tears for God's bottle.

Again, the Lord preserves the remembrance of all paternal anxieties. You see a man from the most infamous surroundings step out into the kingdom of God. He has heard no sermon. He has received no startling providential warning. What brought him to this new mind? This is the secret—God looked over the bottle in which he gathers the tears of his people, and he saw a parental tear for 40 years unanswered. He said, "Go to, now, and let me answer that tear!" and forthwith the wanderer is brought home to God.

Oh, this work of training children for God! It is a tremendous work. Some people think it easy. They have never tried it. A child is placed in the arms of the young parent. It is a beautiful plaything. You look into the laughing eyes. You examine the dimples in the feet. You wonder at its exquisite organism. Beautiful plaything! But on some nightfall as you sit rocking that little one a voice seems to fall straight from the throne of God, saying: "That child is immortal! The stars shall die, but that is an immortal! Sons shall grow old with age and perish, but that is an immortal!"

GOD UNDERSTANDS YOUR HEART.

Now, I know with many of you this is the chief anxiety. You earnestly wish your children to grow up rightly, but you find it hard work to make them do as you wish. You check their temper. You correct their waywardness; in the midnight your pillow is wet with weeping. You have wrestled with God in agony for the salvation of your children. You ask me if all that anxiety has been ineffectual. I answer, No. God understands your heart. He understands how hard you have tried to make that daughter do right, though she is so very petulant and reckless, and what pains you have bestowed in teaching that son to walk in the path of uprightness, though he has such strong proclivities for dissipation.

I speak a cheering word. God heard every counsel you ever offered him. God has known all the sleepless nights you have passed. God has seen every sinking of your depressed spirit. God remembers your prayers. He keeps eternal record of your anxieties, and in his lachrymatory—not such as stood in ancient tomb, but in one that glows and glitters beside the throne of God—he holds all those exhausting tears.

The grass may be rank upon your graves and the letters upon your tombstones defaced with the elements before the divine response will come, but he who hath declared, "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee," will not forget, and some day in heaven while you are raising the fields of light the gates of pearl will swing back, and garlanded with glory that long wayward one will rush into your outstretched arms of welcome and triumph. The hills may depart, and the earth may burn, and the stars fall, and time perish, but God will break his oath and trample upon his promises—never!

Again, God keeps a perpetual remembrance of all bereavements. These are the trials that cleave the soul and throw the red hearts of men to be crushed in the wine press. Troubles at the store may leave at the store. Misrepresentation and abuse of the world you may leave on the street where you found them. The lawsuit that would swallow your honest accumulations may be left

in the courtroom. But bereavements are home troubles, and there is no escape from them. You will see that vacant chair. Your eye will catch at the suggestive picture.

You cannot fly the presence of such ills. You go to Switzerland to get clear of them; but, more sure-footed than the mule that takes you up the Alps, your troubles climb to the tip-top and sit shivering on the glaciers. You may cross the seas, but they can outlast the swiftest steamer. You may take caravan and put out across the Arabian desert, but they follow you like a sinuous, armed with suffocation. You plunge into the Mammoth cave, but they hang like stalactites from the roof of the great cavern. They stand behind with skeleton fingers to push you ahead. They stand before you to throw you back. They run upon you like reckless horsemen. They charge upon you with gleaming spears. They seem to come haphazard, scattering shots from the gun of a careless sportsman. But not so. It is good aim that sends them just right, for God is the archer.

This summer many of you will especially feel your grief as you go to places where once you were accompanied by those who are gone now. Your troubles will follow you to the seashore and will keep up with the lightning express in which you speed away. Or, tarrying at home, they will sit beside you by day and whisper over your pillow night after night. I want to assure you that you are not left alone and that your weeping is heard in heaven.

You will wander among the hills and say, "Up this hill last year, our boy climbed with great glee and waved his cap from the top," or "This is the place where our little girl put flowers in her hair and looked up in her mother's face," until every drop of blood in your heart tingled with gladness, and you thanked God with a thrill of rapture and you look around as much as to say, "Who dashed out that light? Who filled this cup with gall? What blast froze up these fountains of the heart?"

Some of you have lost your parents within the last 12 months. Their prayers for you are ended. You take up their picture and try to call back the kindness that once looked out from those old, wrinkled faces and spoke in such a tremulous voice, and you say it is a good picture, but all the while you feel that, after all, it does not do justice, and you would give almost anything—you would cross the sea; you would walk the earth over—to hear just one word from those lips that a few months ago used to call you by your first name, though so long you yourself have been a parent.

Now, you have done your best to hide your grief. You smile when you do not feel like it. But though you may deceive the world, God knows. He looks down upon the empty cradle, upon the desolate nursery, upon the stricken home and upon the broken heart, and says: "This is the way I thrash the wheat; this is the way I scour my jewels. Cast thy burden on my arm, and I will sustain you. All those tears I have gathered into my bottle!"

USES OF GOD'S LACHRYMATORY.

But what is the use of having so many tears in God's lachrymatory? In that great casket or vase, why does God preserve all your troubles? Through all the ages of eternity, what use of a great collection of tears? I do not know that they will be kept there forever. I do not know but that in some distant age of heaven an angel of God may look into the bottle and find it as empty of tears as the lachrymatories of earthenware dug up from the ancient city. Where have the tears gone? What spirit of hell hath been invading God's palace and hath robbed the lachrymatories? None. These were sanctified sorrows, and those tears were sanctified into pearls that are now set in the crowns and robes of the ransomed.

I walk up to examine this heavenly coronet, gleaming brighter than the sun and cry, "From what river depths of heaven were those gems gathered?" and a thousand voices reply, "These are transmitted tears from God's bottle." I see scepters of light stretched down from the thrones of those who on earth were trod on of men, and in every scepter point and inlaid in every ivory stair of golden throne I behold an indescribable richness and luster and cry, "From whence this streaming light—these flashing pearls? and the voices of the elders before the throne, and of the martyrs under the altar, and of the hundred and forty and four thousand radiant on the glassy sea exclaim: 'Transmitted tears from God's bottle.'"

Let the ages of heaven roll on—the story of earth's pomp and pride long ago ended; the kolobor diamonds that make kings proud, the precious stones that adorned Persian tiaras and flamed in the robes of Babylonian processions forgotten; the Golconda mines, charred in the last conflagration, but firm as the everlasting hills and pure as the light that streams from the throne, and bright as the river that flows from the eternal rock, shall gleam, shall sparkle, shall flame forever these transmitted tears of God's bottle.

Meanwhile let the empty lachrymatory of heaven stand for ever. Let no hand touch it. Let no pawing strike it. Let no collision crack it. Purer than beryl or chrysopeasus. Let it stand on the step of Jehovah's throne and under the arch of the unfading rainbow. Passing down the corridors of the palace, the redeemed of earth shall glance at it and think of all the earthly troubles from which they were delivered and say, each to each: "That is what we heard of on earth." "That is what the psalmist spoke of." "There once were put our tears." "That is God's bottle." And while standing there inspecting this richest lustral vase of heaven the lovers of the palace dome strike up this silvery chime: "God hath wiped away all tears from all faces. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

A woman says that a man can bear the deprivation of his wealth with the calmness of a stoic, but he cannot lose his collar stud on the bedroom floor without a violent outbreak of temper.

A Simple Method.
"A year or so ago," said a young man to a Pittsburg, "I spent a few weeks in New Orleans. One day I saw a machine which bore the inscription, 'Drop a nickel in the slot and learn how to make your pants last.' As I hadn't a great deal of money, I thought an investment of 5 cents to show me how to save the purchase of a pair of trousers would be small capital put to good use, so I dropped a nickel in and a card appeared. What do you suppose it recommended as the way to make your pants last?"
"Don't wear 'em, I suppose."
"No."
"What did it say?"
"Make your coat and vest first."
Pittsburg Chronicle.



Miss Coldeal—Flora Flippie says she does not think you have any brains. Cholly Chumpleigh—Good gracious, how deceitful! Why, she told a friend of mine the other day that I was out of sight.
Miss Coldeal—Well, "out of sight, out of mind," you know.—The Club.

Not If She Knew It.

A few weeks ago a railway collision killed, among others, a passenger living in a country town. His remains were sent home, and a few days after the funeral the solicitor to the company called upon the widow to effect a settlement. She placed her damages at \$5,000.

"Oh, that sum is unreasonable!" replied the solicitor. "Your husband was nearly 50 years old."

"Yes, sir."

"And lame?"

"Yes."

"And his general health was poor?"

"Very."

"And he probably would not have lived more than five years?"

"Probably not, sir."

"Then it seems to me that \$100 or \$200 would be a fair compensation."

"Four or five hundred!" she echoed.

"Why, sir, I courted that man for 10 years, ran after him for 10 more, and then had to chase him down with a shotgun to get him to marry me. Do you suppose that I'm going to settle for bare cost of shoe leather and ammunition?"

The man of law concluded that she deserved all she could get.—Spare Moments.

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